

APPROVED: November 08, 2011

**Rockville Environment Commission
Minutes of the Meeting of Saturday, October 15, 2011
At the Glenview Mansion Cottage, 601 Edmonston Drive**

Attendance

Commissioners: John Becker, Julie Palakovich-Carr, Steve Cardon, Kris Dighe, Alicia Hosmer, Beri Kravitz, Devinie Lye and Clark Reed

Absent: Anne Goodman

Guest: Mark Charles, City of Rockville Environmental Management

Meeting Commencement

The meeting convened at 9:05 am by Chair Dighe.
Introduction of Commissioners and Guest were made.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 13, 2011 meeting were reviewed. Reed moved approval and Kravitz seconded without revisions. The Commission approved the minutes 7-0-1 (with Palakovich-Carr abstaining).

Environmental Management Report

Mark Charles reported that Environmental Specialist I Jake Marren has submitted his resignation effective October 28, 2011, and will be moving to Vermont.

Charles also reported that the enforcement action against Montgomery College was satisfied and would soon be closed. This action allows the Commission to consider the tabled Environmental Excellence Award nomination for its new Green Science Building.

Finally, Charles reported that the next Multi-City Environmental Commission meeting has been scheduled for October 25 at 7:30 pm at the historic Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road in Greenbelt. Commissioners Hosmer and Lye will represent the Commission at this meeting.

Adjourn

The business meeting adjourned at 9:20 am by unanimous acclamation.

Strategic Retreat

The remainder of the day was spent in a strategic retreat. Notes of this meeting are attached to these minutes as an appendix.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 8, 2011 at 7:30 pm** at the **Environmental Management Division Office, 30 Courthouse Square,** Rockville, Maryland, 20850

Appendix

Rockville Environment Commission Retreat Notes Glenview Mansion Cottage

October 15, 2011

Introduction

In preparation for the strategic discussions, the Commissioners reviewed the Charter establishing the Commission, the Commission's historic activities, and the City staff projects anticipated in FY 12 and FY 13. Commissioners were reminded that they have limited time and therefore should make realistic commitments to themselves and the City. One Commissioner pointed out that those actions which might be self-sustaining (build a well and you have water for a long time...) should be considered a priority. Implementation questions, including volunteer recruitment, technical expertise, fundraising and sponsorship, and organizational changes were deferred until after the group establishes priority actions.

Potential Commission Activities for 2011-2013

Activities Related to the *Sustainable Maryland Certified* Initiative

- Serve as the nucleus for the City's *Green Team*.
 - Identified partners included: Burt Hall, Procurement Office, and the Chamber of Commerce.
 - Need to identify additional partners and advisory experts.
 - Determined that a portion of each meeting should be dedicated to *Green Team* business (if needed).
- Work with Environmental Management to design, distribute and tabulate a citizen survey on environment and sustainability topics in the City.
 - Commissioner Kravitz volunteered to take the lead on drafting the survey.
 - Notice of survey will be placed on line, at Swim Center, Senior Center, Rec Centers, City Hall, Libraries, Newsletters, and via Press Release.
- Assist Environmental Management in preparing the City's application for certification.
- Work with the Communications Team and the Public Works Water staff to pursue and encourage water conservation at City facilities, businesses and residences, including updates to the current City water conservation plan.
- Continue to sponsor clean ups of adopted Maryvale Creek stream segment.

- Work with Environmental Management to encourage adoption of all of the City's surface water stream segments.
- Work with Recreation and Parks Department to establish or promote community gardens.
- Assist Recreation and Parks with coordination of farmer's markets across the City.
- Work with Recreation and Parks to continue to participate in Hometown Holidays.
 - Submit March 2012 and March 2013 proposals describing the Commission's outreach needs and partners.
 - Seek volunteers beyond the Commissioners to staff the event.
 - Revisit the green vendor village concept.
 - Revisit the budget for program/performers.
- Work with Environmental Management and Montgomery College to continue to participate in the Rockville Science Day.
- Work with the Purchasing Office to prepare a Green Purchasing guidance and training for City staff.
- Work with Environmental Management, the Budget Office, the City Manager's Office and the Mayor and Council to support the proposed ordinance amendments to create the high performance building tax credit in City Code Chapter 22 resulting in the inclusion of the credit in the FY 2013 budget.
- Work with Environmental Management and the Planning Department on the next update to the City's green building program (amending City Code Chapter 5).
- Assist Environmental Management in developing the Environmental Element to the City's comprehensive master land use plan required by the State. Review and comment and endorse to the Mayor and Council.
- Help to scope the watershed assessments of Rock Creek and Watts Branch. Sponsor public involvement processes. Review and comment on draft reports and endorse to Mayor and Council.
- Identify, organize and present hands-on "stewardship" events in the community such as rainbarrel workshops, energy audits and recycling seminars.
- Work with the City schools to increase partnerships using SSL requirements, contacts at environmental clubs, offering presentations (rain barrels, recycling, etc.) at lower grades, and offering support for the *Maryland Green Schools* initiative.
- Promote backyard habitats and support the City's application for National Wildlife Federation's certification.

- Sponsor a *kilowatt crackdown* competition among City businesses to encourage energy efficiency.
- Amend the City Code to require commercial entities to disclose their energy usage on a periodic basis.
- Work with Recreation and Parks to move the City to 100% alternative energy by a date certain.
- Review and comment on the preliminary recycling and *Rainscapes* “How to” videos produced by Environmental Management. Present videos to community organizations.
- Work with the Communications Team and Environmental Management to announce a goal of 500 private and public solar (PV or Thermal) systems in the City by a date certain. Perform outreach, present recognition, and draft periodic progress reports.
- Work with Environmental Management to increase the recycling rate from 48% to over 50%.
- Work with Recreation and Parks to increase the City’ tree canopy from 44% to X%.
- Work with the City Manager’s office to encourage all City offices to be greener and more sustainable.
- Work with the Police and Public Works Departments to implement and enforce the vehicle engine idling policy.
- Once certified, challenge other communities to match our sustainability performance.

Other Potential Activities

- Assist Environmental Management in developing amendments to the stormwater and sediment and erosion law (City Code Chapter 19). Review and comment and endorse to the mayor and Council.
- Work with Engineering and Environmental Management to identify stormwater facility retrofit opportunities across the City.
- Help plan the City’s annual Earth Day celebration and work with the Communications Team to promote the event.
- Work with Recreation and Parks to place a community bulletin board or rotating environmental demonstration project in Town Center.

- Work with the Planning Department to review and comment on the Rockville Pike Redevelopment Land Use Plan.
- Work with the Planning Department to allow and encourage more urban agricultural activities (e.g., chickens).
- Work with Recreation and Parks to increase the City's use of native plants in City gardens.
- Work with Recreation and Parks to expand the amount of green and open spaces in the City.
 - Research available parcels and identify funding sources.
- Participate in the semi-annual Multi-City Environmental Boards and Commission's meeting.
- Judge the annual environmental photo contest.
- Work with Fleet Services to encourage retired vehicles to be replaced by fuel efficient, hybrids, or CNG vehicles.
- Build a floating trash collector, install and maintain it.
- Work with the Communications Team to promote the "Earth Hour" event where electrical usage is halted for 1 hour.
- Work with Planning and Engineering offices to develop an expedited permit for residents and businesses installing green building upgrades to existing buildings. Amend ordinance(s) as needed to effect the change.
- Work with METRO and AMTRK to improve the landscaping and recycling opportunities at the three Rockville stations.
- Work with the animal control office of the Police Department to address the feral cats in Rockville.
- Work with the Police Department, the City Manager's Office and the Mayor and Council to adopt a leash law for cats that would include provisions for proper disposal of pet wastes.
- Work with the Police Department, the City Manager's Office and the Mayor and Council to adopt a requirement that cats must be spayed or neutered.
- Make the City's green message more visible.
 - Work with Cable channel 11 to develop an environmental education series for broadcast.

- Work with the Communications Team to increase environment and sustainability marketing efforts across all media outlets in the City.
 - Work with the Communications Team to revise and update the content and organization of the Commission web page.
 - Work with the Communications Team to revise the content and organization of other City web pages related to environment and sustainability, including recycling.
 - Work with the Communications Team and the Information Technology office to set up a website where residents and businesses can contact the Commission directly. Prepare timely responses to these inquiries.
 - Research and identify financial and technical resources available to homeowners and businesses interested in pursuing green building upgrades.
 - Work with local shop owners to create a window or interior display on environmental and sustainable topics.
- Recruit additional volunteers to assist in pursuing Commission priorities. Get contact information at all future outreach efforts and events.
 - Work with the City's Sustainability Coordinator to learn more about the City's own green initiatives.
 - Work with Montgomery County to monitor air quality and identify sources of air contaminants within the City's geographic footprint.
 - Work with the City's GIS coordinator to ensure a greater use of GIS capability in environmental planning and decision-making.
 - Work with the Code Enforcement office of the Police Department to amend the City Code to adopt an anti-graffiti ordinance.
 - Revisit the *Environmental Excellence* award process and recommend changes, if any, to Environmental Management, the City Manager's office and the Mayor and Council. Actively solicit, investigate and evaluate award nominations.
 - Monitor and periodically report on the progress of other communities re their environment and sustainability programs.
 - Work with Recreation and Parks to identify city resources (and private ones) to better assist residents with tree issues.
 - Work with the City Clerk and the City Manager's Office to meet with the next City Manager and City Council members to introduce the Commission and Commissioners, offer service, and seek a designated liaison even if liaisons are not routinely assigned to Boards and Commissions.
 - Identify and map plant and animal migration changes responding to climate change. Determine if sufficient migratory pathways allow species movement north and south.

- Work with Recreation and Parks to place more recycling containers at City events as well as in public areas of the City. Start with placing more containers along the Carl Henn Bike Trail.
- Work with Engineering, Planning and Recreation and Parks to establish or increase offsets for impervious surfaces, tree removal and stormwater.

Changes to Consider

The Charter

- Work with the City Clerk's Office, the City Manager's Office, Environmental Management and the Mayor and Council to seek revisions to the 2002 Commission Charter to update it by incorporating the Environmental Management Division and clarify the 9 charges to the group. For example, the charter should reconsider the outside expert inventory, expand the outreach item, and add outside agency interactions.

Commission Committees

- Reconsider the need for all of the three current standing committees
- Consider the need to establish additional or different standing or temporary (project-based) committees.